Financial assistance to agricultural producers

632. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will extend the steps taken in the case of Coffee Growers, like re-scheduling of crop loans, granting fresh loans and interest subsidy scheme, to the cultivators of various agricultural products like coconut, arecanut, tobacco, tea, cotton, pepper etc; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) There is no such proposal presently under consideration.

Free trade with Bangladesh

633. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal for free trade with Bangladesh; and

(b) if so, the details thereof including the present status of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) During the SAARC Summit held in Colombo in July 1998, the Prime Minister had indicated that India would be willing to consider entering into bilateral Free Trade Agreements with SAARC countries which were interested in moving faster towards trade liberalisation. No response to this offer has been received from Bangladesh.

Reform in tea auction system

634. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the